



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**SPEECH BY H.E. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, PHD,
CGH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA
AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI SILICON SAVANNAH
INNOVATION PARK**

NOVEMBER 25, 2024

STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI

1. Today is an important day for all of us and a proud moment for members of the University of Nairobi community. We gather here to launch a defining component of the Silicon Savannah Innovation Park, a bold step in our journey to harness the power of the new Industrial Revolution and position Kenya as a leading industrial nation. The inauguration of this Engineering and Science Complex is both a historic milestone for the University of Nairobi and a defining moment in our nation's journey of transformation.
2. We are here to celebrate a remarkable achievement and, at the same time, ignite a transformative project that will initiate pathways to greater productivity, increase capacities for creativity, multiply opportunities to innovate, drive economic growth and consolidate Kenya's profile as a leader in the digital age.
3. We stand at a crossroads of historic opportunity and challenge in Africa. On the one hand, we possess unprecedented potential to drive industrialisation, innovation, and inclusive prosperity on a global scale. On the other hand, we face complex and dynamic risks, threats, and crises. With a median age of 19 and over 60% of the population under 25, Africa is home to millions of well-educated and highly skilled young men and women ready to make their contribution to the advancement of our economies and industries further abroad.
4. Our youth represent Africa's most valuable resource - a boundless reservoir of energy, creativity, and ambition. This demographic is not merely a statistic; it is the heartbeat of our continent's future.



By channelling this vitality into science, technology, and innovation, we can turn Africa's challenges into opportunities, transform our vast resources into wealth and well-being, and solve global problems with uniquely African solutions.

5. Yet, this immense potential is overshadowed by a sobering reality: Every year, tens of millions of young Africans enter the job market full of hope and a desire to create, innovate and contribute. Unfortunately, for far too many, this transition rarely culminates in opportunity and, more often, in the frustration of unemployment and the uncertainty of informal work. This glaring paradox of underdevelopment in the face of resource abundance and unemployment in the presence of immense industrial potential calls for immediate and urgent action to harness Africa's demographic dividend and transform it into a dynamic engine of inclusive growth, innovation and prosperity for all.
6. In Kenya, the situation is equally unsustainable, requiring urgent and effective strategic intervention. Each year, a million graduates enter the job market, yet more than half struggle to secure meaningful employment with decent incomes. This stark reality has informed the radical plan to enhance labour productivity across all sectors, particularly in the strategic pillars of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda. We fully recognise the urgency of the moment, and that is why this event holds extraordinary significance as a strategic response.
7. In the Silicon Savannah Innovation Park, our promise to the youth materialises as a learning and innovation ecosystem committed to equipping them with the skills, tools and capacity to seize opportunities and thrive in a wide variety of emerging industries, ranging from artificial intelligence, green engineering and advanced manufacturing. The park also serves as a model



for transforming our natural and human potential into tangible prosperity, channelling youthful energy into enterprise, and turning dreams into lived experiences.

8. This project is not just about creating jobs; it is about reshaping Kenya's economic DNA. By anchoring a robust technology and innovation ecosystem within a leading institution of higher learning, we strengthen linkages with industry and forge partnerships regionally and globally. The University of Nairobi's Engineering and Science Complex, which has benefited from a €35 million investment by the Government of France, exemplifies the future of visionary international partnerships. Through collaboration with esteemed institutions such as Université Paris-Saclay and CentraleSupélec, we have succeeded in establishing a world-class platform that affirms Kenya's credentials as Africa's foremost tech capital.
9. The Silicon Savannah Innovation Park embodies what can be achieved when higher education, industry and government unite in a shared mission to drive progress, prosperity and inclusivity, and marks an important step towards the achievement of Kenya's Vision 2030 and the realisation of Africa's Agenda 2063. It also capitalises on critical complementarities with national frameworks like the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation NACOSTI, the National Research Foundation, NRF, and the Kenya Innovation Agency, KENIA, to ensure that we enhance its global competitiveness while staying committed to sustainability and innovation. With its focus on critical fields such as green technologies, artificial intelligence and climate resilience, the park underscores Kenya's explicit commitment to contribute boldly to global efforts to address the most urgent challenges of our time.



10. The Silicon Savannah Innovation Park transcends promises to become an important global innovation hub, the heartbeat of our digital revolution and the engine of our national industrial transformation. By connecting the University of Nairobi's technology-driven ecosystem with Konza Technopolis, we create a seamless pipeline of talent, ideas, and transformative solutions. This is part of an ambitious vision to configure similar systems of interconnected and complementary operations throughout the country, ensuring that Kenyan innovations have a profound impact on both the national stage and the global development agenda.
11. Without a doubt, this is an occasion that brings the best of the University of Nairobi into sharp focus, reminding the nation and the world of its bold ambitions and high standards. It is a call to action to embark on a strategic turnaround, rediscover the university's true potential, and showcase its calibre on the global stage. I am encouraged by the ambition underpinning the Big Five initiatives, which set out a bold blueprint for transformation. Their faithful implementation will make the university the epicentre of visionary leadership, bold innovation, purposeful curiosity, boundless imagination and steady excellence.
12. I take this opportunity to appreciate the generous support of our partners, especially the Government of France, whose investment has made this historic moment possible. This park is an enduring testament to the power of ambitious collaboration powered by a shared vision. Together, we are demonstrating that partnerships founded on mutual respect can achieve extraordinary positive impact.



13. I also have a message to the youth of Kenya: Your government is shaping the future, working for you and delivering opportunities for you to learn, work, create and innovate a path to the future for yourself and for Kenya. The Silicon Savannah Innovation Park is your platform to define the future of Kenya's digital economy.
14. The Silicon Savannah Innovation Park is more than an infrastructure project; it is an investment in our people, our future, and our global standing. Our message is clear: Kenya will not merely participate in the 5th Industrial Revolution; we will lead it. Let us seize this defining moment to turn our vision into a legacy of inclusive transformation that endures for generations.
15. Together, we must work hard and build a nation where opportunity is not a privilege for the few but the birthright of all, where everyone is assured of both capacity and opportunity to transcend every challenge and contribute meaningfully, and where our only limits are defined by the boundaries of our ambition and determination. I wish you success as you embark on the great project of delivering transformation.

The University of Nairobi's Silicon Savannah Innovation Park has now officially launched.

**Thank you,
God bless you,
God bless Kenya.**

